Amateur Radio Newsline™ Report 1389 – March 26, 2004

Amateur Radio Newsline report number 1389 with a release date of Friday, March 26th, 2004 to follow in 5-4-3-2-1.

The following is a QST. A popular talk show host says “No” to BPL and REACT gives its support to the Amber Alert system. Find out the details on Amateur Radio Newsline report number 1389 coming your way right now.

(Billboard Cart Here)

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THE BPL FIGHT: ART BELL W6OBB VS. BPL.

If it did not know before, a large portion of the American public is now keenly aware of the danger that Broadband Over Powerline Internet access poses to the nation's emergency communications infrastructure. And you can thank radio talk show host Art Bell, W6OBB, and ARRL President Jim Haynie, W5JBP, for bringing it to everyone's attention. Amateur Radio Newsline's Mark Abramowicz, NT3V, had an opportunity to speak with the internationally famous radio talker and has the rest of the story:

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>From the high desert in the great American Southwest, a call to arms has been sounded.

>From his home base in Pahrump, Nevada, W6OBB - better known to millions of commercial radio listeners as Art Bell - has called on America to stand up and fight what he charges is the greatest threat to the nation's security - Broadband Over Powerline.

Bell charges BPL will cripple the nation's emergency communications backbone - striking at the heart of homeland security.

Bell picked up the charge against BPL during his radio show broadcast Saturday, March 20 in which he introduced ARRL President Jim Haynie, W5JBP to his audience.

Haynie and Bell pointed out the BPL interference threat extends far beyond the amateur bands. Both Haynie and Bell warned that many police and fire companies, federal disaster agencies and the FBI and the military would be rendered helpless if BPL is rolled out across the nation.

Bell says he's especially worried about the potential of another major attack against the United States and what BPL would do to our nation's ability to communicate.

"The emergency communications, my God, aircraft, amateur radio, FEMA, any other emergency agencies that are going to have to rely on HF communications," Bell says.

"We certainly can't depend on satellites. As a matter of fact, if we should get into a conflict, some sort of major conflict the satellites will be the very

first thing that will go. And minus satellites for communications, we're dependent on the good old-fashioned shortwave bands, VHF, UHF, the whole schmear to keep our nation talking. And in a time of national emergency we need to be able to talk to each other."

Bell says he's appalled at the behavior of the Federal Communications Commission. He says they're acting like cheerleaders instead of regulators. He charges corporate greed is driving BPL and ignoring the studies showing the technology - as proposed on the HF bands - won't work without causing massive interference.

"I've always had the deepest respect for the Federal Communications Commission," he says. "However, I think in recent years, there've been a lot of changes at the FCC that include the fact that there aren't so many engineers at the commission any longer, but there are a lot of bureaucrats."

Bell says he believed after reading the Federal Emergency Management Agency's assessment of BPL that the findings would have been enough to shut it down.

"The FEMA filing was very strong," Bell says. "They essentially said, 'Look, our receivers and transmitters are not going to be able to function with BPL in place.' And, they specified the power levels they would have to go to continue to communicate and suggested the taxpayers can't, wouldn't be able to afford such changes.

"So, with that kind of filing, frankly when it came out I thought BPL was dead. Boy was I wrong!"

After doing more research, Bell says he decided to take the case to his listeners. And he says the only way to do it is to point out the risk to their safety.

"I don't think we're going to combat it by saying, 'Save ham radio." The public doesn't care enough and I'm sorry to have to say that, but that's what I believe," Bell says.

"I love ham radio. It's been my life. I've been a ham since I was 12. But the greater, larger American public just doesn't care enough about ham radio.

"And if they think they can plug in their computer to the wall and have instant internet, that's a more attractive idea to them than the guy down the block with a tower in the air."

Bell says his mission is clear: "I do a radio program on 500 radio stations nationwide, including the top 50 markets in the U.S., " Bell says. "And I'm going to do everything I can to drive this home as hard as I can that communications, and certainly ham radio is part of that emergency communications chain, there's no question about that.

"But emergency communications across the board are threatened by BPL."

Bell says all hams need to wake up and heed his call to action.

"We have to get to the larger media in America and, as hams, we have to make the general public, underline the word general public, aware that our emergency communications are threatened," Bell says. "The American public remembers 9-11.

The American public knows what the continuing threat is.

"We've declared war against terrorism and why would we want to turn around and cripple our effective ability to wage war? And that's exactly what BPL is going to do."

Bell says if energized with information about BPL's risks to national security, millions of Americans can quickly become allies.

"We need to get the word out to the general public and begin to have them write to their congressmen, their senator," Bell says. "And that's the only approach that I see at this point with the juggernaut that is presently underway from the Federal Communications Commission and the (BPL) industry, the only way we're going to stop it is to make the general public aware of the threat."

Bell says there are other issues, including interference to TV channels 2 through 6, residual noise to the AM radio bands and virtual loss of CB bands used by the many truckers who listen to his show. He says there are also privacy issues, especially the potential of the government and large companies to track people and their habits and choices on a BPL system.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, I'm Mark Abramowicz, NT3V in Philadelphia.

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Bell currently hosts the weekend edition of the Coast to Coast AM. He also indicates that his presentation on Saturday, March 20th was only round one. He is lining up other guests to talk about the BPL issues in the near future. To find out when, keep checking the shows website at www.coasttocoastam.com. (ARNewsline(tm))

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THE BPL FIGHT: HAM RADIO VS. THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Meantime, a story in a recent issue of the Wall Street Journal about Amateur Radio’s stand against BPL is raising the eyre off many in the nations ham radio community. The item appears to take the position that radio amateurs are alone in opposing BPL. Also, that their doing do is holding back the flow of progress in technology.

You can judge for yourself by taking your web browser to http://tinyurl.com/357ye. That is if its still there by the time this newscast goes to air. (ARNewsline(tm))

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RFI: ELECTRIC BLANKETS - A NEW CHAPTER FOR AN OLD PROBLEM

As if BPL was not enough, now there’s another source of RFI to worry about. Its things that keep us warm.

According to Roy Trumbull writing in the CGC Communicator, RF interference from electric blankets is another problem that can be added to a history of similar events. The ones caused by heating pad thermostats and the class of transformers used for door bells. Turnbull says that RFI from these devices

can affect AM reception for quite a distance from the source.

Turnbull also adds this interesting aside concerning electric blanket safety. He says a little noted change in product design took place when there was that firestorm some years ago over magnetic fields from power lines. The electric blanket makers got a jump on things by switching to twisted pair wiring. This says Turnbull solved the problem of the significant magnetic fields that were produced by the earlier blanket design. (CGC)

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Break 1

>From the United States of America, We are the Amateur Radio Newsline, heard on bulletin stations around the world including the KB3FCZ repeater serving White Oak Pennsylvania.

(5 sec pause here)

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RESCUE RADIO: REACT AND THE AMBER ALERT PROGRAM

Ham radio appears to be leaving itself behind in the area of responding to notices of kidnapped children called Amber Alerts. Meantime REACT and other citizens radio organizations are taking the point position in spreading word of these vital searches. Amateur Radio Newsline's Bruce Tennant, K6PZW, takes a look at how REACT has gotten involved:

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Nobody seems to know why hams appear to have no interest in the Amber Alert program, but other civic minded radio services are not standing still. And the April issue of Popular Communications magazine is highliting REACT as being one of those jumping in to providing communications for these alerts and searches.

The magazines Info Central column highlights the activities of REACT teams across Ontario Canada and the northern United States. This, as they responded to an Amber Alert issued by the Ontario police after Cecelia Zhang was abducted in Toronto.

Ron McCracken who is past President of REACT told Pop Comm that they were given details of the alert and were asked to broadcast it on C-B channel 19 to truckers passing along the highways. The alert included details of the kidnap vehicle and the victim along with the suspects.

The broadcasts began at about 5:30 in the evening and went on through midnight. McCracken says that CB radio was combined with computers and e-mail to spread the word far and wide in a very short time. This allowed truck drivers all along the border to keep an eye out for both the little Cecilia and her abductor.

According to McCracken, this was REACT's first response to an Amber Alert and in his estimation it went very well. You can read the full story starting on page 5 of the April issue of Popular Communications magazine.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, I’m Bruce Tennant, K6PZW, reporting.

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The Amber Alert was created in 1997 as a tribute to 9-year-old Amber Hagerman. She was kidnapped and brutally murdered while riding her bicycle in her hometown of Arlington, Texas.

If you want to know more about how you can start an Amber Alert Plan in your area and involve your radio hobby, it can be found by taking your web browser to www.missingkids.com. Then click on the words Amber Plan. (PopComm, ARNewsline(tm))

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RESTRUCTURING: SAN MARINO AND NORWAY EXPAND 40 METERS

Two more nations have gained spectrum at 7 MHz. Both are in Europe. Jeramy Boot, G4NJH, in Nottingham in the UK has more:

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Two more European countries have gained access to the 7100 to 7200 kHz segment of the 40-metre band. San Marino, T7, has authorised amateur radio operation in the 7100 - 7200 kHz band on a Secondary non-interference basis, with effect from the 25th of February.

The Norwegian Post and Telecommunications Authority has also announced that Norwegian radio amateurs can use frequencies in the segment 7100 - 7200 kHz with secondary status starting from the 1st of April.

This is in addition to the existing segment 7000 - 7100 kHz where radio amateurs have primary status. The maximum transmitter output power in the 7100 - 7200 segment will be 100 watts in Norway, and the maximum bandwidth 6kHz.

Jeramy Boot, G4NJH.

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Croatia was the first European country to expand its 40 meter band. That happened last December. (GB2RS)

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RESTRUCTURING: ARRL AND NCVEC PETITIONS ASSIGNED RM’S

Here in the U-S, our FCC has assigned rulemaking numbers to separate petitions for license restructuring and changes in code requirements filed by the ARRL and the National Council of Volunteer Examiner Coordinators. The ARRL petition has been designated RM-10867 while the NCVEC petition is now RM-10870.

Two other petitions were released for comment at the same time - RM-10868 was filed by the Radio Amateur Foundation, and RM-10869 by Ronald Lowrance of Georgia. Both also seek changes in amateur licensing requirements, particularly with relation to the code exam.

All petitions are available online via the FCC's Electronic Comment Filing System website. The comment deadline on all four petitions is April 24, with reply comments due 15 days later. (CQ, W2VU)

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ENFORCEMENT: WARNINGS TO TWO TRUCKING FIRMS ABOUT 10 METER OPS

The FCC has warned the owners of a Bristol Pennsylvania trucking company to get their personnel off of the 10 meter Amateur band or face some expensive consequences. In a letter to Cassidy's Express the FCC says that it has information that one of the company’s tractors pulling a "CAI" trailer on Interstates 476 N and 76W in Pennsylvania, was the source of unlicensed radio transmissions on the 10 meters.

The incident took place last October 9th between 8 AM and 8:30 AM local time. The Commission has informed Cassidy's Express that operation of radio transmitting equipment without a license is a violation of Section 301 of the Communications Act. That it could and will subject the operator to fine or imprisonment, as well as seizure of any non-certified radio transmitting equipment.

For those not aware, unlicensed operation carries a fine of $7,500 to $10,000 for each instance charged. A similar letter was sent to CLR Transport of Saluda, North Carolina warning of unlicensed 10 meter operation from one of their trucks on Interstate 85 between Gastonia and Kings Mountain, North Carolina on July 14, 2003. (FCC)

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THE CLUB SCENE: USS HORNET ARC NOT DISBANDED

Contrary to rumors, the Amateur Radio club that supports museum ship U-S-S Hornet has not been disbanded. This, according to Tom McGlinn, KO6HA who is the trustee for the NB6GC callsign and the new president of the USS Hornet Amateur Radio Club.

Writing on the QRZ.com websire, McGlin says the original story of the club being dissolved is untrue. He says that the group is still active and aboard the USS Hornet and that all QSL requests will be handled as in the past. Please direct any inquiries concerning the USS Hornet ARC QSL program to ko6ha@earthlink.net (QRZ.com)

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ON THE WEB: BIG UPGRADE AT QRZ.COM

The servers that provide you the QRZ.com website have been relocated to the company’s hosting facility in Phoenix, Arizona. The new location affords QRZ.com with 24 hour a day, 7 days a week backup power and a very fast 10 Megabit connection directly to the Internet backbone.

QRZ.com owner and administrator Fred Lloyd, AA7BQ, gave special thanks to Chris Radicke, N7TWW and Mark Krotz, N7MK, who assisted him in transporting the computers, building the cabinet shelves, pulling cables, and in generally

making the transition go as smooth as silk. Lloyd says that thanks to some great prepatory work QRZ.com was out for no more than 2 hours during the location changeover. (QRZ.com)

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ON THE WEB: WWW.SCOTHAM.NET

WWW.SCOTHAM.NET is a new Internet portal concerning ham radio in Scotland. The aim of the site is to further the interests of Scottish hams in all aspects of Amateur Radio. The portal also presents an interesting view of life in Scotland as it pertains to ham radio. Again that U-R-L is WWW.SCOTHAM.NET and you will find it on the World-Wide-Web. (MM0DFV)

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WITH THE HANDI-HAMS: 3905 QSL BUREAU

The Board of Directors of the 3905 Century Club has unanimously approved the establishment of a QSL Bureau and Manager. This, to support any Handi-Ham members that wish to participate in the club's nets.

Handi-Ham members can use the bureau a number of ways. This includes the actual completion of cards for the contacts they make on 3905 Century Club nets.

The 3905 Century Club has nets on four bands and all modes including SSB, CW and Digital. More information, including net schedules can be found at www.3905.com. (Handi-Hams)

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CONVENTIONS AND HAMFESTS: ARRL AT NAB IN APRIL

Turning to the ham radio social circuit, the ARRL will be visible at the upcoming National Association of Broadcasters convention. Amateurs visiting the exhibits at the Las Vegas Convention Center are invited to stop by Lobby Booth 9 where the ARRL will be exhibiting its latest publications and other materials related to the hobby.

The booth will be staffed by ARRL national officers and volunteers from the Las Vegas area headed up by Bill and Carolyn Cornelius. They are K8XC and K9XC respectively. The booth will also be able to provide information on the April 21st NAB Ham Radio Reception sponsored by Heil Sound.

Bill Cornelius does have a limited number of complimentary VIP Exhibits Passes. Requests for them go by e-mail to k8xc@aol.com. (K8XC)

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HAMFESTS AND CONVENTIONS: EMCOMMWEST IN MAY

And word that the combined EMCOMMWEST 2004 conference and the Reno Spring Hamswap is slated for the weekend of May 22nd to the 23rd. This years theme is Amateur Radio Emergency Communications in the 21st Century and will feature appearances by knowledgable guests that include Dan Miller, N-3-U-F-G from

ARRL Headquarters. His presentation will include information on the ARRL Emergency Communications on-line courses as well as an overview of how amateur radio interfaces with The Office of Homeland Security.

For complete up to date information, location and on-line registration for EMCOMMWEST and the Reno Spring Hamswap, take your web browser over to www.emcommwest.org. Planners say that the site will be updated frequently with new information as it becomes available. (Emmcom West)

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BREAK 2

This is ham radio news for today's radio amateur. From the United States of America, We are the Amateur Radio Newsline with links to the world from our only official website at www.arnewsline.org and being relayed by the volunteer services of the following radio amateur:

(5 sec pause here)

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EMERGING TECHNOLOGY: PROFESSOR SAYS ISP'S SHOULD POLICE CONTENT

A new cyberspace business plan from a legal scholar says that Internet Service Providers should become cyber cops and force everyone to pay a royalty fee for every song, movie or book they download to their personal computers. Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, has the details:

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Lon Sobel is a professor at Loyola Law School and an expert on copyright and entertainment law. He says that Internet service providers such as America Online and Earthlink must become digital police and send customers monthly bills based on how much copyrighted material they download.

Under Sobel's plan, consumers who download expensive software such as Adobe Photoshop could pay as much as $600, while someone who grabs a single song could be charged as little as 49 or 50 cents. These charges would be in addition to the usual dial-up or broadband monthly connection fees.

Critics of the plan include computer experts, Internet service providers and -- believe it or not -- the entertainment industry. Bob Blakley, a computer scientist and security expert at IBM, says that a clever hacker could write computer code that would attaches itself to every piece of copyrighted content on the Internet. Then it could funnel some of the cost of the download to the hackers personal bank account.

Blakley and others say peoples attitudes is one of the biggest challenges in digital rights management . That an entire generation of consumers has become used to free music and other content posted on the Internet. He says that they will do anything it takes to get content for free. This includes breaking the law to avoid paying $10 to $20 for a compact disc, DVD or electronic book.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, I'm Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF

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A senior executive at Verizon Communications is quoted as saying that Internet service providers will reject the plan noting that few companies could keep track of every downloaded item or determine the value of every file passing through their system. (Published news reports)

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WORLDBEAT - CANADA: NEW CONTEST MANAGERS

Radio Amateurs of Canada has announced the appointment of Sam Ferris VE5SF, Bart Ritchie VE5CPU and Bruce Rattray VE5RC as managers for the Canada Winter and Canada Day contests. They replace retiring managers David Shipman, VE7CFD and the Moncton Seniors Amateur Radio Club who have performed this duty for the past several years. (RAC)

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WORLDBEAT -NEW ZEALAND: NZART COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS

NZART President Peter Norden, ZL2SJ, has announced the appointment of Noel Rowe, ZL3GR, to society's Council. Rove is a second term councilor having served previously in the 1990's. He replaces Ted Minchin, ZL1MT, who resigned for personal reasons.

Another Council appointment is that of Joe Reed, ZL2AH who volunteered to take on the tasks of Reciprocal License Bureau Manger. He replaces the late Russ Garlick, ZL3AAA. (NZART)

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HAM RADIO IN SPACE: K6DUE MEMORIAL ARISS EVENT QSL CARD UPDATE

Hams waiting for QSL cards from the K6DUE Memorial operating event, please listen up. Frank Bauer, KA3HDO, who is ARISS International Chairman says in order to save postage costs, the process being used for the special event certificates is this. The various regions such as Europe, Canada, USA, Russia and
Japan are collecting the QSLs and generating compiled lists of names and callsigns. These lists are then used to print the certificates and return them to the regions for direct distribution. Bauer asks that everyone be patient, indicating that it will be well worth the wait. (KA3HDO)

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DX

In D-X, three German operators will be active as A35DA, A35DH and A35DJ from Fafa Island in Tonga through the 29th of March. Activity is on all bands from 80 to 10 meters on SSB, PSK 31 and RTTY. QSL as directed on the air.

Also, word that KE2SP is active on 10 through 20 meters from the island of Hydra. This, as SV8 stroke KE2SP. He will be there until the 15th of June. The island counts as EU-075 for the Islands on the Air awards program.

And the Ohio Penn D-X Newsletter reports that ZL1CT is planning to be active fro Chatham as ZL7V. This, from July 5th to the 15th. Activity will be on 80, 40, 30 and 20 meters using CW and SSB. QSL this one via N3SL.

(Above from various DX news sources)

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THAT FINAL ITEM: A HAMVENTION 2004 RADIO ROAD INFORMATION SERVICE

And finally this week, if you plan to drive to this years Hamvention, there will be a special service to make your trip a bit more pleasant. This as Information Radio in Dayton, Ohio announces plans to provide Road to Hamvention announcements on Highway Radio 1610 AM. As you might expect, 1610 Kiloherrtz is the frequency and the person behind the idea is Norm Schrein, KA8PGJ.

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Schrein” “For Hamvention, we are planning on putting some information in regard to directions to the Hara and hours of the hamfest itself. People coming into town can obviously get information via the ham repeaters, but we may be hitting people who aren’t hams at all or who do not have Amateur Radio equipment but who will pick this up in the loop and take in the hamfest.”

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Information Radio is a service provided by the Emergency Communications Center Incorporated. This is a not for profit organization with which Schrein is associated. He says that stations like this are a lot more common than many people realize:

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Schrein: “530 Khz is where to find a lot of the stations like this and then about 1610 through about 1700 Khz you will find a lot of these travelers information stations as well. A lot of them tend to be site specific. That is, if you go through Pennsylvania, you may hear something about one of the state or national parks or involving the roadways if its run by the Dept. of Transportation. Where ours is a little unique is that it is kind of all encompassing. It covers everything happening in the Dayton area from local parks and recreationb to people having a parade to events like the Hamvention.”

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Schrein says that anytime you are headed to the Dayton area be sure to tune your car radio to 1610 kilohertz. Whether its trying to find your way into town or heading to the HARA Arena for Hamvention 2004, Information Radio will be there to serve you.

More information on information radio stations can be heard on this weeks Rain Report. Its at www.rainreport.com or landline at 847-827-7246. (ARNewsline (TM))

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NEWSCAST CLOSE

With thanks to Alan Labs, AMSAT, the ARRL, the CGC Communicator, CQ Magazine, the FCC, the Ohio Penn DX Bulletin, Radio Netherlands, Rain, the RSGB and Australia's Q-News, that's all from the Amateur Radio Newsline(tm). Our e-mail address is newsline @arnewsline.org. More information is available at Amateur Radio Newsline's(tm) only official website located at www.arnewsline.org. You can also write to us or support us at Amateur Radio Newsline(tm), P.O. Box 660937, Arcadia, California 91066.

For now, with Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, at the editors desk, I’m Jim Damron, N8TMW, and I;m Jeff Clark, K8JAC, saying 73 and we thank you for listening."
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